

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 064356

12

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S/PRS - JOHN FEENEY

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US

SUBJ: PRESS GUIDANCE ON POSTPONEMENT OF JOINT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

1. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF DEPT'S MARCH 16 PRESS BRIEFING DEVOTED LARGELY TO POSTPONEMENT OF JOINT COMMERCIAL, ENERGY AND HOUSING COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

2. RE. REASONS FOR POSTPONEMENTS, SPOKESMAN SAID QTE IN LIGHT OF THE SITUATION IN ANGOLA, WE FELT WE COULD NOT CONDUCT OUR BUSINESS WITH THE SOVIET UNION AS USUAL UNQTE AND THAT QTE THE REASON WE FEEL THIS WAY IS THAT ACTIONS SUCH AS THOSE . . . IN ANGOLA HAVE THEIR PENALTIES. THEREFORE, WE DECIDED NOT TO PROCEED WITH THE MEETINGS OF THESE THREE JOINT BODIES UNQTE. QUESTIONS OF WHEN DECISIONS TAKEN, HOW LONG WE WOULD SUSPEND THE HOLDING OF SUCH MEETINGS AND UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 STATE 064356

WHETHER SOME OTHER ASPECTS OF BILATERAL RELATIONS MIGHT BE

AFFECTED WERE LEFT UNANSWERED.

3. RE IMPLICATIONS FOR SALT TALKS, SPOKESMAN SAID QTE WE DO NOT VIEW SOVIET ACTIONS IN ANGOLA AS OF THE MAGNITUDE WHICH WOULD CAUSE US TO INTERRUPT SALT TALKS UNQTE.

4. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ABOUT REASONS GIVEN THE SOVIETS THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS FOR POSTPONEMENTS, SPOKESMAN SAID E WAS NOT IN POSITION TO DISCUSS SUCH EXCHANGES. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY QUESTION QTE THE US EMBASSY IN MOSCOW, THIS MORNING GAVE AS THE REASON FOR THESE POSTPONEMENTS SIMPLY THAT MORE PREPARATORY WORK WAS REQUIRED. WAS THAT DONE DELIBERATELY UNQTE. SPOKESMAN SAID HE WAS UNAWARE OF EMBASSY STATEMENT (REUTERS CARRIED TICKER ITEM QUOTING EMBASSY SPOKESMAN TO EFFECT THAT WE HAD ASKED FOR POSTPONEMENT UNTIL THE SECOND HALF OF THE YEAR FOR MORE PREPARATORY WORK).

5. ALONG THE SAME LINE, QUESTION WAS ASKED QTE. BUT IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE EMBASSY MADE A STATEMENT SAYING THAT THE ONLY REASON WAS FOR FURTHER PREPARATIONS, I THINK YOU OUGHT TO SAY WHAT YOU TOLD THE RUSSIANS, BECAUSE IF THE EMBASSY WAS UNDER THAT IMPRESSION PERHAPS THAT'S WHAT THEY TOLD THE RUSSIANS UNQTE. SPOKESMAN RESPONDED THAT WE WERE NOT TRYING TO PLAY TWO GAMES AT ONCE, GIVING ONE ANSWER TO SOVIETS AND ANOTHER TO AMERICAN PUBLIC, BUT THAT HE WOULD NOT GO INTO SUBSTANCE OF DIALOGUE WITH SOVIETS.

6. IN RESPONSE TO OTHER QUESTIONS, SPOKESMAN SAID HE WAS UNAWARE THAT THERE HAD BEEN ANY CONSULATIONS WITH CONGRESS CONCERNING POSTPONEMENTS, THAT THERE WAS NO LINK TO RECESS IN OIL TALKS (SEPTTEL), AND THAT HE WOULD LOOK INTO STATUS OF OTHER JOINT COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

7. IF FULL TEXT OF TRANSCRIPT NOT CARRIED WIRELESS FILE AND IF FURTHER DETAIL NEEDED, PLEASE ADVISE. KISSINGER

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